

## SELECTBOARD MEETING

### *Approved Minutes*

January 28, 2013

7:00pm Calais Town Office

**Attending:** Denise Wheeler, John Brabant, Scott Bassage, Toby Talbot, Mike Garand, Donna Fitch, Rolf Mueller, Alfred Larrabee, Will Walters and Rose Pelchuck.

#### **Actions:**

Approval of January 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes – Scott Bassage made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0.

Approval of the January 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting Minutes – Scott Bassage made a motion to approve the Minutes as written. Denise Wheeler corrected a few typos. The motion was seconded, voted on and carried 4-0. Mike Garand arrived after the vote.

Town Invoices & Road Commissioner's Orders of the Day – The Selectboard reviewed and processed the town invoices and orders of the day as per usual protocol.

Change Selectboard Meeting Location to the Town Office – Denise Wheeler suggested the Selectboard continue to meet at the town office in the winter months instead of at the elementary school. Donna Fitch offered to publicize it in the town report. Scott Bassage noted at the organizational meeting in March, when the Selectboard sets the meetings for the year, the change in winter meeting location could be officially changed. Rose Pelchuck reminded the Selectboard that the maximum capacity of the town office is 16 as noted in the Use of the Town Office Policy. The Selectboard agreed that if they were going to hold a public hearing then the Selectboard would meet at the school.

Road Commissioner is out plowing the roads but arrived later in the evening.

Public Comment - Rolf Mueller spoke about funds collected by the Delinquent Tax Collector and having transparency in the town report. Currently there is no documentation of the amount of fees Lesley Fitch, Delinquent Tax Collector, receives. Donna Fitch suggested doing some research about how other towns report this. The printer deadline is this weekend so the Selectboard will pursue it for next year's annual report.

Woodbury Fire Department – The Selectboard spoke by speakerphone to Steve Morse, WFD President, to clarify dispatching costs from Capital West. Steve Morse stated that after they left the meeting with the Selectboard, they went back to Woodbury and asked for member's recollection and learned how Capital West was separating the flat fee per town and per call amounts. Steve then reported Capital West said that was not true. WFD went back to their proposed budget figure for the Town of Calais and factored out the dispatch from 2012, 2011, 2010 to come up with a new amount. John Brabant offered comments, believing Capital West is scamming Calais, that Calais is being double billed. Toby Talbot said Woodbury is not being billed for calls in Calais. Steve Morse from WFD said Capital West has a formula to bill towns. Toby noted WFD has taken care of the dispatch discrepancy by revising the budget figures. Toby Talbot said this is a Capital West issue not with the fire departments. Toby suggests the revised budget request from WFD for \$19,831.00 be incorporated in the Selectboard budget. Denise Wheeler would like someone from Capital West to come in to discuss the dispatch bill with the Selectboard.

Annual Selectboard Report – Denise Wheeler wrote a draft Selectboard Report that was reviewed by the Selectboard and others. John Brabant read aloud the paragraph about the town looking at purchasing McCullough's gravel pit. Scott Bassage added language about the Capital Reserve Equipment Fund and the policy to go along with the use of the fund. The Highway Department major culvert projects will be included in the report.

Warning Articles Review – Denise Wheeler asked Gus Seelig if he would be Town Moderator again. Toby Talbot spoke about cash flow and how much the town will have to borrow in anticipation of taxes. Denise Wheeler proposes collecting taxes in August and November as currently done but in two equal payments.

The discussion turned to buying a new Road Grader. With the current proposal to finance \$250,000.00 from Merchant's Bank, John Brabant noted over 10 years we would be paying \$75,000.00 in interest. The cost to lease a machine for a month is \$7,500.00. John Brabant believes we have a decent machine (1997 grader) and thinks we could lease until we could buy as needed. This way we're not buying a machine, we don't really need right now. Alfred Larrabee thinks the 1997 has ten more years after the work just put into rebuilding the engine. Alfred Larrabee said, "The month you rent a machine, you have to work it; if it rains for a week the rented machine then sits for a week".

Mike Garand spoke to Ted Lane, mechanic who repaired the grader, and said it's good for five years. Mike Garand looked into the cost of renting a grader, thought that neighboring towns can share the use of renting a grader, and divide the cost. The cost was about \$7,500.00 a month and Mike ran down the list of available graders at the various dealers. Mike also checked with the VT Local Roads to see how many towns besides Calais have two road graders: Brattleboro, Stowe, Barre Town and Lyndon. Mike Garand is in favor of saving up for a grader by starting a Capital Reserve Fund. Mike said, "We have a lot of equipment out there". Mike Garand, also the East Montpelier Road Foreman, would like to rent a road grader for two weeks and work with Alfred so Calais has it the other two weeks (for total of a month). Denise Wheeler is in favor of the towns sharing other equipment. Mike cited the roads in East Montpelier tend to dry out sooner as it is a bit south of Calais. Since Mike tracks every hour his equipment runs, he reported the grader is used primarily from April to October then sits the rest of the year. Scott noted leasing a grader is a way to replace the 1968 grader. Mike asked Alfred if he could keep two graders busy. Alfred Larrabee said, "It depends on the weather – if the '68 was more reliable it would be out there more". Alfred said, "We are trying to replace the 1968".

Alfred Larrabee obtained information from a dealer about a 1990 used Road Grader, 772 AWD, with 6-7000 hours for \$28,000.00 with a new motor and they offered \$17,500.00 in trade for the old 1968 grader. It was from the town of Westford. The Selectboard is in favor of moving quickly to purchase the used 1990 grader for about \$10,000.00 with the trade in of the 1968 grader. Alfred will look at the budget to see where the \$10,000.00 would come from and get a firm quote from CR Woods on the machine. Alfred reminded the Selectboard to not put off buying a grader forever. Denise Wheeler responded by saying that the Capital Reserve Fund will have \$100,000.00 in four years that can go towards buying a grader and other equipment purchases.

Alfred Larrabee spoke about the top road projects for consideration: Martin Road, Center Road, Max Gray Road and George Road then finishing up the North Calais retaining wall project. The Selectboard feels strongly about completing the North Calais Retaining Wall Project this year. Culvert replacement discussion ensued.

#### Other Business:

- John Brabant said if the town needs to install guardrails that we should install something more aesthetically pleasing and sensitive to the area.
- Digging up the underground fuel storage tanks at the town garage was discussed. Alfred Larrabee reported that if the town did it, Paul Miller would install new tanks for \$400.00 that includes doing the soil test and overseeing the project. Calkins in Danville quoted \$6,000.00 but said to budget \$10,000.00 to have enough to cover if there is contamination. Alfred Larrabee has to get replacement tanks. Denise Wheeler said, "Let's plan on it and get it done".
- Scott Bassage noted that for every fund the Selectboard proposes, we have to have voter authority to establish the fund.
- Denise Wheeler has not heard anything from the court regarding the Doug Lilley Small Claims appeal.

FY '14 Budget – The Selectboard discussed putting a line item for Animal Control for \$500.00 to be used for quarantined dog expenses.

Fire & Ambulance Cost Allocations – Toby Talbot reported after reviewing the split value of the town's

combined average of the grand list, businesses and business real estate the rate 30.87% (rounded to 31%) would be Calais' share of the split with the Town of East Montpelier to support EMFD budget costs. If you went by the five-year average, it would be 29.71%. Toby Talbot recommends the split allocation with Calais paying 31% of the EMFD Budget and East Montpelier paying the remaining 69% to be instituted in to the next budget after the last level funded EMFD Budget (representing about a \$4,000.00 increase). Toby Talbot believes this is a fair way to split costs between both towns.

The Selectboard agreed to meet on Saturday, February 2, 2013 at 10:00am to finish the Warning.

John Brabant made a motion at 9:45pm to continue the meeting to Saturday, February 2, 2013 at 10:00am at the Town Office. The motion was seconded, voted and carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose Pelchuck  
Administrative Assistant